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School Committee Minutes 05-14-2002

The Arlington School Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, May 14, 2002

Present: **David McKenna, Chair**
 Suzanne Owayda, Vice Chair
 Paul Schlichtman, Secretary
 Barbara Goodman

Joani LaMachia
Denis Sullivan @ 7:55
Martin Thrope

Superintendent: **Kay Donovan**
Asst. Supt. **Joanne Gurry**
Chief Financial Office: **David Kale**
Special Education Director: **Marilyn Bisbicos**

Call to Order: 7:30

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

" Carolyn Simmons voiced her concern over the obscene language and blatant disrespect of teachers and administrators in the student run newspaper the '**Tile-Floor Press**'.

" Jesse Stamell AHS senior believed that the atmosphere at AHS has changed this past year. He expressed concern that his younger brother would not enjoy the same experience of having his opinions heard and the opportunity to stand up for his rights as he had during his past three years at the high school.

" Gene Stamell stated his disappointment in the climate of the high school and the process used in investigating an alleged hazing incident.

" Elaine Backman AHS parent addressed the Committee relative to what she believes is 'the sense of growing undertow of discontent at the high school among students, teachers and fellow parents'.

" Rick Sharf 7th grade science teacher at the Ottoson Middle School expressed his opposition to the MCAS test and requested that the School Committee adopt a resolution that would allow seniors to receive their diploma even if they did not pass the required MCAS test to graduate.

" Nora Mann member of the safe school task forced expressed concern over the events of the AHS cast party and several issues that she believes have not been addressed. AHS facing challenges around drug and alcohol and to help students make safe and respectful decisions. Ms. Mann also stated that she believed the process used in investigating the incident ignored basic principals of parents.

" Dr. Gary Vezzoli former AHS science physics teacher praised his last year physics class on their findings of planetary alignment measured gravitational effects. Their work was written up in the Boston Herald and in '**The Journal of Physics Education**' March Issue.

" Amy Cohen encouraged the School Committee to approve out of state field trips and also encouraged the Administration to support the new principal, provide some type of forum to help students and parents address their issues.

" Debbie Minns AHS parent expressed her desire that the remaining two years as a AHS parent provide the best experience for her children and the other students at AHS.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Schlichtman reviewed Correspondence

Ms. LaMachia having received correspondence surrounding a number of issues at the high school offered the following motion:

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously Voted that the School Committee direct the Superintendent to conduct a full evaluation of the high school principal and report back to the School Committee.

.. **Approval of minutes:**

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously Voted to approve the Regular meeting of April 9, 2002.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously Voted to approve the executive session of April 9, 2002

On a motion by Ms. Owayda and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously Voted to set four to five dates for the School Committee to meet with the Student Advisory Committee for the 2002/2003 school year.

APPROVAL OF SUMMER PROGRAMS

Menotomy Preschool

Kerriane Cronin, Director of Menotomy Preschool presented to the Committee a proposal for a summer program at the preschool. Ms. Cronin stated that she was responding to a parent survey that supported a summer program. The program will run from July 8, 2002 – August 16, 2002. Families will have the option of a 2, 3, or 5 day week; hours are 8:30 am to 12:30pm each day. Cost to attend the program is \$150.00 for the 5-day week, \$90.00 for the 3 day/week and \$60.00 for the 2-day/week option, in addition there is a \$10.00 registration fee.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously Voted to approve the Menotomy Preschool School summer program

Ottoson Summer School

Stavroula Bouris, Principal at Ottoson Middle School, requested approval for a **Summer Program 20002** at the Ottoson. Ms. Bouris explained that the program is designed to strengthen and deepen the student's knowledge and understanding in the areas of English and Mathematics. Students entering 7th 8th and 9th grade are eligible to participate. The program will run for sixteen days starting June 21st through July 18th, with a cost of \$350.00. Stavroula did note that the program would run only if there were sufficient enrollment and staffing.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously Voted to approve the Summer School Program at the Ottoson Middle School.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Bob Sprague, Communications Specialist for Arlington Public Schools, presented schools the 4th annual report '**Exceeding Our Goals**'. Mr. Sprague stated that his role as Communication Specialist is "to present to the public the best of what Arlington Public Schools offers via available media". Bob submits feature stories, prepares school notes, and press releases for submission to the Arlington Advocate. In addition, he maintains the Arlington Online, official town Web site where he posts the Summaries of School Committee meetings as well as school-related links. Mr. Sprague is currently working with Steve Mazzola, APS Technology Director to transfer the town site's school content to the k12 Web site.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously Voted to receive the Arlington Public Schools fourth annual report **Exceeding Our Goals** and to send thanks to Mr. Sprague for his outstanding work.

APPROVAL OF FIELD TRIPS

.. **Math Club, Montreal Canada**

.. **Ottoson 6th & 7th grade field trips**

.. **Performing Arts field trip**

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously Voted approval of the field trips as presented (Math Club to Montreal Canada pending final approval by the Superintendent, Ottoson 6th & 7th grade field trips and the Performing Arts Dept. field trip).

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded it was unanimously Voted to refer the field trip policy (file IJOA) to the policy & procedures subcommittee to reconfigure and set terms and conditions on out of state field trips, permissible modes of travel, distance and activities, to suggest changes as appropriate.

REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

.. **Budget Subcommittee**

Mr. Kale reported that we are in a holding pattern in terms of State aid funding. The Town still faces a shortfall of \$1.3

million between projected revenues and expenditures. Mr. Kale explained that the need to implement this recommended list of reductions is dependent upon action taken by the State Legislature and Governor with respect to reductions in local aid; it is expected that a clearer picture on the status of local aid funding will be available by the end of May 2002. The Finance Committee will take another look at estimated revenues Mr. Kale outlined the reductions under consideration if the School is forced to reduce its budget by an additional \$311,000.00 on top of the already proposed \$920,000.00 in cuts. Proposed reductions include:

- .. Reduction of lunch room/playground aides
- .. Increase of elementary lunch from \$1.50 to \$1.75
- .. Increase athletic fees by \$50.00 from \$125.00 to 175.00
- .. Reduce one part-time clerical position
- .. Reduce one ESL tutor position
- .. Reconfigure vacant Nurse Supervisor's Position
- .. Reduce one Special Education teacher position
- .. Reduce Principal's Assistant stipends at the Elementary level.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously

Voted that the policy & procedures subcommittee address and review the issue of user fees and scholarships in APS.

.. **Infrastructure Committee**

Supt. Donovan reported that the Infrastructure Committee met on Monday. The group discussed the new School Building Assistance Bureau's rules. The Committee also agreed that the PTBC move ahead with the initial plans for the Thompson and Stratton Schools.

.. **Curriculum & Instruction**

Ms. Goodman reported that the Curriculum & Instruction subcommittee met on May 8th to review the proposed graduation requirements for AHS (attached). The subcommittee did approve the requirements and recommends the approval by the full committee.

The Committee will vote AHS graduation requirements at the next meeting.

REPORT OF PTBC

Mr. Thrope reported that the PTBC decided that construction on the Dallin School would begin in July of 2003. Work at the Peirce is ongoing, Mr. Thrope stated the contractor is expected to be present at the June 4th meeting, at which time a decision on the opening date of Peirce will be made.

Mr. Thrope stated that since his appointment to the PTBC in the Spring of 1995 he has gained a body of knowledge on public construction and thanked the PTBC for the opportunity to serve.

Mr. Thrope did point out that his request was to remain as the school committee representative to PTBC, that his leaving that position was not voluntary, and according to Town Meeting article the school committee must vote on the new appointment.

APPROVAL OF STRATTON DEDICATION

The Stratton fifth grade class requested that the driveway in front of Stratton School be dedicated and named "Walsh Way". Mr. Schlichtman pointed out that the policy does require **biographical and/or other available** data accompany such requests. The Committee will consider the request at a 1st reading and will vote on it at the next regular school committee meeting.

GOALS PROCESS UPDATE

Dr. Gurry reported that all subcommittees are meeting and working on their goals. The Asst. Supt. stated that each committee has a "very clear vision of where they are going" and anticipates that draft documents will be available to the School Committee at the June 11th meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was

Voted to appoint Suzanne Barrata Owayda as the School Committee Representative to the Permanent Town Building Committee. Roll Call 6-0-1 (abstention by Mr. Thrope).

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded it was unanimously

Voted to appoint Paul Schlichtman as the School Committee Representative to the Vision 2020 Committee

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia and seconded it was unanimously

Voted that the budget subcommittee evaluate the kindergarten program as well as what guidelines are used for financial aid and scholarships.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously
Voted to direct Paul Schlichtman to craft language that would respond to proposed legislation that would cut State Aid
to Cambridge and Hampshire Regional for issuing diplomas to students who did not pass the MCAS test.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was
Voted to enter executive session for a legal and personnel issue with no further business to be conducted except to
adjourn Roll Call: Unanimous

Executive session: 10:25 PM to 11:15 PM

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously
Voted to adjourn at: 11:15 PM

Respectfully submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary